

Saint Louis Audubon

Bulletin

January, 1961

Vol. 29, No. 2

THE ST. LOUIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

... Presents ...

TWO UNUSUAL FILM EVENTS

Friday, January 20, Society Members Will View

"THE VALLEY AND THE STREAM"

By JAMES AND ROBERT WILKIE

(see page 2)

Tuesday, January 31

EMERSON SCOTT will Present

"PIKA COUNTRY"

The little rabbit-like pika is one of the leading characters in a stirring film of the majestic northwest photographed in color and narrated by Emerson Scott of Caro, Michigan. Audubon Screen Tour audiences guided by an experienced and dedicated naturalist explore vast wilderness areas inhabited by trumpeter swans and ptarmigan, magpies, pine squirrels, elk, moose, and black bear. Pika country is an enriching experience in nature discoveries.

During the second World War Mr. Scott was an Army sergeant fighting in the European campaigns. After he was wounded in Italy and hospitalized for eight months, he worked for the American Red Cross. Later he served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Michigan's Veterans' Trust Fund.

This, the third Audubon Screen Tour of the season will be held at Third Baptist Church, Tuesday, January 31, at 8:15 p. m.

JAMES AND ROBERT WILKIE
Present
"THE VALLEY AND THE STREAM"
A True Life Nature Film

St. Louis County Library, Lindbergh and Clayton Roads
January 20, 1961 . . . 8:00 p. m.

"The Valley and The Stream" is a story about the valleys of the upper midwest and the animals, birds and insects that live there.

The valleys of the upper Mississippi water shed were started by glacial action and developed by erosion. Thirty to fifty thousand years have healed glacial scars and molded raw gullies into a landscape possessed of a gentle beauty unmatched by the overpowering vistas of the far west or the brooding rock-strewn slopes of the east.

The healing influence flowing through the valley is the stream of life. The creative power that covered the slopes with grass, brush and trees; that at last confined the brook to its channel with a web of roots, and slowed its headlong course with fallen trees and water plants.

Water has cut thousands of patterns in the valley slopes but life has formed millions of channels in this same valley; channels more fixed and unchanging than the river's course, some with more twists and turns than the winding brook.

Our actors are creatures that float lightly and securely in the great stream of life. They do not question the past nor take thought for the future. They live by unthinking response to the guiding hand of nature; the creative force which works such wonders that storybook magic and miracles pale into insignificance.

YEAR-END ACTIVITIES

Twenty members of the Alton and Edwardsville, Illinois group participated in the Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count on December 26. 46 species were counted and, of particular interest, 25 bald eagles, 8 in one group, were seen on the ice floes in the Mississippi River. Members of the St. Louis Audubon Society participating were Bertha and Joel Massie, Sam Alfend and Earl Hath, with leader Kemp Hutchinson.

The St. Louis Audubon Society Bird Count on December 31st with 26 participants noted 64 species. One of the unusual finds was approximately 10,000 blackbirds coming to roost along Hwy 94 in St. Charles County of which 8000 were estimated to be redwing blackbirds, 500 rusty blackbirds, 250 grackles, and some Brewer's blackbirds. The leaders of this group were Earl Comfort and Earl Hath.

THE ST. LOUIS PLANETARIUM

A notable addition to the cultural and recreational facilities of St. Louis is on the way. This is the St. Louis Planetarium, now under construction on the site of the old Mounted Police Station in the southeastern section of Forest Park.

This project is attracting nation-wide attention for several reasons. It is the first planetarium in the United States to be constructed at

public expense. It will be the largest in this country, both in its seating capacity, about 400, and in the space for exhibits. The design of the structure, by Mr. Gyo Obata of the firm of Hellmuth, Obata and Kassabaum, will be most original and attractive.

The projector, being made by the Goto Manufacturing Company in Japan, will be the finest and most versatile instrument obtainable. It will reproduce all aspects of the sky, including such special events as eclipses and the northern lights, for any date, past or future.

In addition to the theater under the dome and the large exhibit space around the dome there will be an observing deck, rooms for meetings, offices, a shop and other usual facilities.

The Planetarium is scheduled for completion in October, 1961.

With the Climatron, the Planetarium and, perhaps, the Saarinen Arch, St. Louis will become a Mecca for those interested in unusual and highly functional architecture.

WHAT ARE THEY?

The very bright object high in the southwest in our evening sky is the planet Venus, the nearest of our planetary neighbors and the one most like the earth. It will become still brighter during the next several weeks. Star-gazers will have a special treat on the evening of January 19, when the Moon passes quite near Venus.

Mars, with its characteristic orange color, is high and bright in the evening sky, just north of east.

Both Venus and Mars are being carefully studied by astronomers in the attempt to learn more concerning their atmospheres, temperatures and surface conditions in general.

ST. LOUIS AREA BIRD TABULATION

By J. EARL COMFORT

Competing with Santa's visit the various Area Christmas bird counts add holiday excitement for birders because they offer a last chance to add to the year list as well as social enjoyment. Earl Hath, the only participant in all 3 area counts was as busy as a beaver helping in the Alton, Ill. count as well as those of the Webster Groves Nature Study Society and St. Louis Audubon Society.

Our Audubon count on the last day in 1960 resulted in year birds for all 25 counters, most of whom compile lists as a matter of course. Most observers added the Short-eared Owl, Harlan's, Krider's and Rough-legged Hawks, Winter Wren and Brewer's Blackbird.

Some unusual species for the season during the count dates were Coot, Killdeer and Great Blue Heron, the rarest Glaucous Gull, Long-eared Owl, and Harlan's Hawk in the total of 87 species observed during the accepted dates. Highlights were the unusually high counts of Redwings, Red-headed Woodpeckers and European Tree Sparrows.

Rarest birds of 1960 were Ferruginous Hawk by Dick Anderson and Red-necked Grebe by a Webster Groves Nature Group.

Those who attained the coveted 200 species list last year were Dick Anderson, with 243, Wally George, 242, Mitzi Anderson, 228, Mike Flieg, 228, Tony McColl, 210, Earl Hath, 209, Earl Comfort, 207 and John (Jack) McDonald, 201. Mitzi was the only lister among the fair sex to make the "200 Club".

The composite total St. Louis list showed 259 species were reported for the entire year 1960.

Orchard Farm, Mo. (Mississippi River bottom land sloughs 45%,

untilled weed-grown fields 26%; tilled fields, 29%). Jan. 1, 8:00 A. M. to 4:15 P. M.; cloudy; Temp. 31 degrees above to 37 degrees above; wind WNW, 5 to 9 mph; ground and water hard frozen. Twenty-five observers in 1 party. Total party-hours 8½ (7½ on foot, ¾ by car); total party-miles 17 (4½ on foot, 2½ by car). Great Blue Heron, 3; Snow Goose, 10; Blue Goose 71; Mallard, 489; Pintail, 1; Green-winged Teal, 1; Canvasback, 2; Lesser Scaup, 15; Goldeneye, 38; Common Merganser, 19; Red-tailed Hawk, 11; Krider's Hawk, 1; Harlan's Hawk, 1; Red-shouldered Hawk, 2; Rough-legged Hawk, 1; Bald Eagle, 2; Marsh Hawk, 7; Sparrow Hawk, 3; Bobwhite, 1; Herring Gull, 28; Ring-billed Gull, 16; Mourning Dove, 12; Barred Owl, 1; Short-eared Owl, 4; Kingfisher, 3; Flicker, 6; Pileated Woodpecker, 1; Red-Bellied Woodpecker, 19; Red-headed Woodpecker, 167; Sapsucker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 3; Downy Woodpecker, 13; Northern Horned Lark, 2; Prairie Horned Lark, 33; Blue Jay, 19; Crow, 217; Black-capped Chickadee, 6; Titmouse, 18; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Brown Creeper, 8; Winter Wren, 1; Carolina Wren, 1; Mocking Bird, 1 Robin, 6; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 8; Cedar Waxwing, 46; Loggerhead Shrike, 2; Starling, 838; Myrtle Warbler, 9; European Tree Sparrow, 106; Eastern Meadowlark, 7; Redwing, 1500 (estimated); Brewer's Blackbird, 2; Rusty Blackbird, 500 (estimated); Common Grackle, 257; Cowbird, 19; Cardinal, 16; Goldfinch, 3; Slate-colored Junco, 16; Tree Sparrow, 29; White-crowned Sparrow, 1; White-throated Sparrow, 5; Swamp Sparrow, 3; Song Sparrow, 4; Lapland Longspur, 18. Total, 65 species. (Addition of 355 House Sparrows increases the total to 66 species.) About 5000 individuals. Observers: Sam Alfend, J. Lee Bess, Alberta Bolinger, Geo. Cameron, J. Earl Comfort (compiler), Mike Flieg, Walter George, Joe Stumpf, R. H. Hanselmann, Steve Hanselmann, Earl Hath, Mr. and Mrs. Joel Massie, John McDonald, Carl Niewohner, R. C. Quade, Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Vasse, Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Wilhelm, Jr., Duis Bolinger, Margaret Self, Robt. Self, Mrs. Jas. Nelson and John Gilland. (St. Louis Audubon Society.)

SOME INTERESTING RECORDS OF EXTINCT ST. LOUIS AREA MAMMALS

By DICK GROSSENHEIDER

Many bones of an extinct peccary were found in Cherokee Cave in South St. Louis about a dozen years ago. It was probably more than twice as heavy as our forty-five pound collared peccary. Peccaries, the New World representatives of the swine family, have three-sided tusks, razor-edged behind, and growing downward rather than outward or upward. There are three toes on the hind foot as compared with four in the Old World or domestic pigs. A musk gland is located at the top of the rump in the two species living today. Our living United States peccary perhaps ranged as far north as the Red River in Arkansas, bringing it fairly close to us. Musk hogs now range from southern Texas and Arizona to Patagonia. Peccaries are known to have lived as far back as the Miocene time in North America. They may have always had a penchant for retreating into caves. The animals still do that in Arizona and elsewhere.

Remains of a *Glyptotherium* or tortoise-armadillo was found along with the peccary bones far back in the cave. This would place both animals in the same time zone. The order *Glyptodontia* originated in South America, and the North American genus invaded our continent in the Pleistocene. This giant armadillo-like animal had a carapace of

fitted, bony polygons without the movable bands of the armadillos. The skull is short with simple, fluted teeth lacking enamel. The backbone forms a rigid, welded tube, and a complex joint in the neck enabled the mammal to pull its head within the shell as the tortoises do. The toes of the short, rounded feet have hoofs instead of claws. A series of movable, bony rings encased the tail as in the armadillo that we know, and which may now be invading the southwest part of the state. The glyptodonts became extinct in prehistoric time over their entire range. The St. Louis discovery is the northermost record of the group. This specimen, and the associated peccaries, are now in possession of the American Museum of Natural History.

At Kimmswick, near the mouth of the Meramec River, fairly complete mastodon remains were found a couple of decades ago. Beneath them and hard by man-made flints were also uncovered. What a fascinating thing to ponder! These browsing elephantine animals may even have survived the ice age here and persisted until ten or even five thousands years ago. From time to time more teeth and other mastodon fragments come to light in the river valley. The most nearly perfect remains at Kimmswick were secured by the British Museum in London.

In 1949 a large Pleistocene bighorn sheep horn was dug up from eighteen feet below ground surface in McFall Creek Valley. This creek flows into the Meramec River from the south. The locality is about five miles south of Pacific at the northeast corner and damsite of artificial Lake Tekakwitha. The specimen was recently obtained by our member, Wally George, and is now in possession of Dr. Harold Bulger. We have so far been unable to find any other records for the state.

In 1943 the bone skull cap, including the horn cores and top halves of the orbits of a bison, was dredged up from forty feet down in the gravel bed of the Meramec River by the Missouri Aggregate Co. The locality is below high palisades overlooking the river a mile or so from Glencoe. The specimen was at that time acquired by Mr. Louis Weber and recently came into the writer's possession. Perhaps this animal had been chased over the escarpment to its doom by a pack of wolves. One geologist's estimate of its age is fifty thousand years. The sutures and skull conformation do not exactly match those of our modern born bison which was native here. Nor do they closely match other prehistoric bison species described from neighboring states. How interesting it would be to know how the living animal looked in comparison with present bison! There was probably a very close resemblance. Dr. Bulger and I plan to have the bison and bighorn specimens exactly aged by the carbon 14 method.

A HOUSEWIFE'S DIARY ON A EUROPEAN TREE SPARROW FOR 15 MONTHS

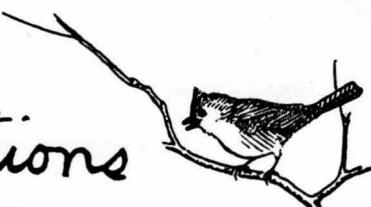
By EVA C. KIRKPATRICK
(Continued from Last Issue)

April 8, '56—Discovery—Greedy Gus is a mother.

Put out Easter grass on the bushes. Thought the birds might like it. E.T.S. in house had big strand of it hanging out their hole. It was blowing in the wind and seem to frighten them. They were darting at it and then flying away. So I put on some gloves and went out and pulled it off.

April 9, '56—Wonder if I frighten them off? No activity at E.T.S. nest. Kemps wanted to know how I knew Greedy Gus was a mother when there were no eggs in the nest yet. Well, I'll amend that

(Continued on Page 7)



Observations

By J. EARL COMFORT

Summer, Fall and early Winter birding in the St. Louis Area lagged except for a few ardent observers who set a pace which was hard for the average lister to follow. Most recorders owe quite a few rare species on their lists to these indefatigable checkers.

The Shaws' Garden Arboretum third Saturday and last Sunday of the month field trips made for pleasant relations and good fellowship as well as interesting and educational Nature sorties.

As usual, the monthly August A. Busch Wildlife Area bird counts of the Webster Groves Nature Study Society were aided and abetted by the St. Louis Audubon Society, resulting in some unusual and interesting finds.

As of Christmas time, 258 St. Louis Area bird species had been identified and reported, some affording exciting birding moments.

The two best listings of the year to date have been Red-necked Grebe at the Busch Area on October 9th and a light phase Ferruginous Hawk in St. Louis County by Dick Anderson on Thanksgiving Day.

Perhaps the most interesting find was an Avocet at Grand Marais State Park, East St. Louis, first noticed by Wally George. Fortunately, the accommodating rare shorebird remained at one of the park lakes through October into November to make easy listing for all who had the time and the desire to make the pilgrimage to the popular lake. In addition to the Avocet the same lake yielded a rare Turnstone and several Dunlinns as well as numerous Golden and Black-bellied Plovers, giving us a shot in the arm in the fag end of the Autumn birding.

Swan Lake, in Calhoun County, Illinois, again gave us a sizable migrant flock of tiny Hutchin's Canada Geese on our late October visit. This lake Federal Wildlife Refuge annually yields excellent wildfowl bird study during the Fall migration.

Here are some of the up-to-date names of Area bird species as adopted by the AOU in their latest checklist:

New Name	Old Name
Red-Necked Grebe	Holboell's Grebe
Common Egret	American Egret
American Widgeon	Baldpate
Common Goldeneye	American Goldeneye
Common Scoter	American Scoter
Common Merganser	American Merganser
Ferruginous Hawk	Ferruginous Rough-legged Hawk
Peregrine Falcon	Duck Hawk
Common Gallinule	Florida Gallinule
Common Snipe	Wilson's Snipe
Dunlin	Red-backed Sandpiper
Western Kingbird	Arkansas Kingbird
Swainson's Thrush	Olive-backed Thrush
Water Pipit	American Pipit
Solitary Vireo	Blue-headed Vireo
Common Grackle	Bronzed Grackle
American Goldfinch	Eastern Goldfinch
Rufous-sided Towhee	Red-eyed and Spotted Towhee

statement. Greedy Gus is a female.

April 13, '56—Huzzah! E.T.S. have returned to their nest. This is indeed a lucky Friday 13th! Mrs. Gus stays in the box and keeps her head out all the time, much like a clown at the carnival at whom you throw baseballs. The female actually guards the nest. The male brings grass to her and she disappears. Another E.T.S. tried to get in today but had no change. Mr. and Mrs. Gus are very certain about their rights. Kemps quickly made another bluebird house — will see if the other couple moves in. Female left box and went about two feet away. Other couple came immediately but ours beat it back to the box.

April 14, '56—It looks as if the female has pulled feathers off lower half of back. Could I be right? Anyhow she has a bare spot there. Curious to see nest later. Both will be in the box at the same time. The other E.T.S. couple tries to get in but resident shooed them off. Mrs. Gus leans out of the house, twists her head around and scolds (like Irish washwoman in tenement house) and Mr. Gus divebombs. Other couple politely left.

April 15, '56—Mr. and Mrs. take turns sitting in the box. Both feeding at the feeder when starling tried to enter box. Immediately they flew to box; one (MOM?) entering while Pop attacked and chased starling.

April 16, '56—22 E.T.S. at feeder at one time.

April 23, '56—Down to 32 last night. Nuthatch and bluebird both tried to oust our E.T.S. out of their house but had no luck. We have a popular bird house. But the tenants can hold their own.

April 30, '56—Mrs. Gus doesn't seem to be afraid of me. Was planting at the foot of their tree. She just stuck her head out and seemed to watch me but didn't fly away.

May 11, '56—Hear chirping inside box. There are some baby E.T.S. in brush where the quail feed, and their parents are feeding them. It isn't ours. The male is still feeding Mrs. at the box.

May 21, '56—BIRD BREAKFAST TODAY. After everyone left watched Mrs. Gus push 3 babies out. Thought I would go out and see the nest. Didn't make it. Within the hour Kemps and I watched another E.T.S. carry grass to the box. We know it is another couple because Mr. and Mrs. Gus are feeding their babies at the feeder. Talk about children looking like their parents. Can't tell the kids from their parents except when they have their mouths open for food.

May 25, '56—Baby Day! E.T.S. are being fed. Cardinals are feeding theirs; downies have theirs at the suet and appetites of baby woodpeckers are amazing. No wonder the father is so thin. English sparrows are in the brush pile with 2 offspring; Robins are also feeding theirs.

June 16, '56—E.T.S. couple pushed their two babies out of the nest today. Almost a month to the day that Mr. and Mrs. Gus pushed theirs out.

June 26, '56—BABY DAY—Baby towhee; cardinals; baby E.T.S.; baby downies; baby red bellies; is father cardinal weaning his? Pecks and chases them when they bother him for food.

June 27, '56—THIRD TIME—E.T.S. using our bluebird house. Believe that it is Mr. and Mrs. Gus. E.T.S. don't feed in large numbers at the feeder any more. Incidentally a wren moved in the other bluebird house. Can't win. Bluebird finally sighed, gave up and is living in a nearby tree.

July 1, '56—Record of the nests in our yard;
Robin—pear tree

Wren—bluebird house in ash tree. (2 broods)
E.T.S.—bluebird house in another ash tree. (3 broods)
Brown Thrasher—thicket in a grape vine tangle.
Bluebird—hole in an old wild cherry tree.
Starling—hole in another wild cherry tree.
Flicker—in a persimmon stump.

(Continued in next issue)

ST. LOUIS AUDUBON BULLETIN

PUBLISHED BY

The St. Louis Audubon Society

Earl H. Hath.....President
Miss Alberta Bolinger.....Executive Secretary

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